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Bush Acts Eager To Face Carter For Presidency

HONG KONG (UPI) — George Bush, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said today he was interested in running against President Carter in the next presidential election and "I'm not coy about it."

"You see," Bush told the Foreign Correspondents Club, "my thesis is that the United States won't elect again a person totally unfamiliar with foreign affairs, totally running against Washington and how Washington works."

"That was a phenomenon. And it's not going to happen again, in my judgment," said Bush, 53, who also was chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in Peking from 1974-75 and a former American ambassador to the United Nations.

"So I do think I've had some credentials in various government service positions — plus party — that would make a race, if I decide to do it, credible," he said. "And also I'm not quite arrogant enough to feel nobody else would have those credentials either."

"But yes, I'm interested. I'm not coy about it, and realize that when you're outside with no base, that makes it extraordinarily difficult, but not impossible," said Bush, chairman of the Republican National Committee from 1973-74.

Bush, who is in Hong Kong as director of the First International Bankshares Inc. to attend a board meeting of the bank holding company, said he was "doing those things incessantly that one should do if one was going to contemplate . . . or one was going to make the race."

Bush resigned from his post as head of the CIA and left office on Jan. 20, 1977 — Carter's inauguration day. He was the first Republican in Houston, Texas, to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966.